



Assistive Technology (AT) Forward March

Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members! The AT Forward Update is a monthly publication, which provides information about the AT Forward Project, highlights the upcoming AT Forward Community of Practice (CoP) meetings, and includes additional AT resources and tips. **We are now over 725 Members and growing!**

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Micro-Credentials for Assistive Technology!



The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward is excited to provide free supported micro-credentials and macro-credentials assistive technology learning opportunities for the 2021-22 school year. Micro-credentialing is an opportunity for educators to learn on their own time, pace, and place. Through this process, you can earn a total of twelve badges for each completed micro-credentials. If you earn seven badges, you will qualify for a macro-credential. The courses are self-paced and coaching support sessions are available to provide guidance and to answer questions. There are many topics from which you can

choose and customize your own learning, including assessment, AAC, vision, transition, etc. If you would like to register for a micro-credential learning opportunity and join an AT learning community from across the state, please visit the AT Forward Micro-Credentials Home Page. Thank you to the 182 people who have started their journey towards earning their Micro- Credentials, and to date, 54 badges have been awarded,

Congratulations to the following individuals for earning their AT Badges!

Ann Barry: Racine Schools - **Ann has earned all 12 badges!**

Laura Simpson: CESA 6 - Laura has earned 2 badges!

Claire Habeck: Oshkosh Area School District has earned 4 badges!

Paula Lees: Seymour Community School District

Jennifer Aney: Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

March AT Forward CoP Meetings

There will be only one Community of Practice meeting in March.

March 7, 2022: [Low and No Cost Resources to Support Assistive Technology webinar](#)

This one-hour session will look at low and no cost resources and tools to support students in the classroom. Examples of assistive technology tools that are cost-effective and easy to access will be shared and discussed. Participants will be encouraged to share their favorite low/no cost assistive technology tools.

What is the Quality Indicator Spotlight for March?

Each month will highlight a Quality Indicator for Assistive Technology, which can easily be utilized to provide training for district staff. For March, the spotlight is [Indicator 3 AT in the IEP](#).

“The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires that the IEP team consider AT needs in the development of every Individualized Education Program (IEP). Once the IEP team has reviewed assessment results and determined that AT is needed for provision of a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE), it is important that the IEP document reflects the team’s determination in as clear a fashion as possible. The Quality Indicators for AT in the IEP help the team describe the role of AT in the child’s educational program.” *Indicator 3: Assistive Technology in the IEP - Quality Indicators for including Assistive Technology in the IEP.* (2022). Qiat.Org.

[Visit the Quality Indicators for including Assistive Technology in the IEP for more information.](#)

Common Errors with Assessing Needs for AT (QIAT)

The following pitfalls can result in students not receiving FAPE.

1. IEP teams do not know how to include AT in IEPs. Please see the [January 10, 2022 recorded CoP meeting](#) for more information on documentation of AT in the IEP.
2. IEPs including AT use a “formula” approach to documentation. All IEPs are developed in similar fashion and the unique needs of the child are not addressed. Remember the “I” in IEP stands for individualized.
3. AT is included in the IEP, but the relationship to goals and objectives is unclear. Please [refer to the DPI Website for more information](#) on writing good goals and objectives.
4. AT devices are included in the IEP, but no AT services support the use. We start each AT Forward meeting with a reminder that AT is not just stuff, it's a service, too. [Please see the November 8, 2022 CoP Meeting for more information](#).
5. AT expected results are not measurable or observable. [Please refer to Part 3 of the January 10, 2022 CoP meeting](#) for ideas on data collection.

Family Connections

Do you have a student who has Cerebral Palsy or know of a family that needs support raising their child who has a physical impaired? As educators, we can only do so much. Oftentimes, it takes families connecting with other families to make the real deep connections that are needed. Try pointing your families in directions, like: [the Cerebral Palsy Foundation Facebook page](#) or [the Center for Parent Information and Resources Cerebral Palsy web page](#).

Looking to Learn more or give back to the AT Community?



Joy Zabala was a gifted educator and someone who gave 200% to the community of assistive technology. Sadly, Joy is no longer physically with us, but her spirit is living on through a Fellowship. A Fellowship has been established in her name, sponsored by the Zabala Family, CAST and QIAT Leadership. The focus on this fellowship is to expand and guide the provision of services of AT and/or AEM through mentoring. The expected time commitment of the fellowship supported partnership is the academic year of 2022- 2023. The QIAT Leadership Team is currently seeking mentors. [View the Joy Zabala Fellowship Mentor Application for more information.](#)

This fellowship will support emerging, early career professionals who, in collaboration with a seasoned mentor, will:

- strengthen their expertise and skills in services supporting assistive technology (AT) and/or accessible educational materials (AEM), and
- share what they learn with the larger community of stakeholders.

There are two ways to participate in this Fellowship:

- Become a mentor or mentee to support practice.
 - Apply as mentoring partners (one mentor & one mentee).
 - Apply as an individual either willing to provide or seeking mentoring. These individual applications will be included in a mentor/mentee pool, and a match may be considered from this pool.
 - [View the mentee application](#)
 - [View the mentor application](#)
 - Applications due March 15,2022.
 - Become a donor and support the project.
 - [Online donations can be made on the Jay Zabala Fellowship page on the CAST website.](#)
 - Mail donations can be checks made payable to CAST, Inc. Please note Joy Zabala Fellowship on the check
- CAST, Inc.
178 Albion St.

Suite 210
Wakefield, MASS. 01880

The process is outlined below:

1. Mentorship partners will be informed of acceptance. If necessary, mentors and mentees will be matched, based on skills, and needs.
2. A work plan mutually developed by mentor and mentee submitted, including a proposed budget.
3. Partnerships selected are notified.
4. Mentors participate in orientation.
5. Mentorship partners are in place for academic year 2022- 2023.
6. Mentors will have a coordinator available to support their team.
7. Mentorship partners will have a final report due at end of academic year.

What is the Assessing Student's Needs for Assistive Technology (ASNAT)?

ASNAT is the acronym for the manual and process of assessment in the area of Assistive Technology. If your school district would benefit from a step-by-step AT assessment guide, this is the manual for you. [This link will take you to the entire ASNAT manual](#), but we suggest that you break it down into manageable sections. This month we will look at [Chapter 14 of the 5th Edition of ASNAT Manual](#). The name of the chapter is AT for Multiple Challenges. This chapter dives into the complex needs of students who have “medical, sensory, physical and cognitive challenges.” *Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology - Page 2.* (2022). Wati.Org. <http://www.wati.org/free-publications/assessing-students-needs-for-assistive-technology/page/2/>

AAC Corner

Choosing a communication system for students with complex needs often requires more than just choosing a device and a symbol set. Often it requires the team to look at an access method. This month we will be looking at eye gaze as an access method.

Eye gaze is defined as accessing or controlling your device mouse movements with your eyes. The computer or AAC system uses a camera to “track” your eye movements that in turn moves the mouse or cursor on your screen. Holding or dwelling on a specific icon will cause a mouse click or selection. Eye gaze has improved over the years and is now extremely accurate and amazingly powerful! For a student, or adult with a physical disability, eye gaze technology can open the world to them. Eye gaze can be used to access

environmental controls, books, email, social networking and so much more. It speaks volumes in assisting people with severe physical disabilities to be independent.

[For more information on how eye gaze can empower a user visit abilities.com](#)

When looking at eye gaze as an access method, data collection and assessment are essential pieces to the puzzle. A team approach is the only way to make sure this access method is correct and not too fatiguing. A Physical Therapist, and Occupational Therapist are essential team members when looking at positioning for eye gaze. Another member of the team may also be a vision specialist, especially if the person has an eye disorder such as nystagmus. [This 6-page document](#) discusses positioning and other aspects of assessment for eye gaze. The [AAC Institute](#) also has a great PowerPoint presentation that can assist teams with the process of evaluation. [MyTobiiDynavox](#) also has many great [data collection tools](#) and ideas for reducing fatigue of the user.

Like other access methods, one of the best ways to really understand what it is like to operate a computer with your eyes is to try it yourself. It is also important to remember that when assessing an access method, not to ask too much of your user. For example, if you are unsure if the user understands a specific icon or its function, maybe start with a [cause and effect game](#) or maybe a [simple drawing game](#).

The [ATLC Library](#) has several devices that have eye gaze technology. They are the Tobii Dynavox I-13 and I-16; and the Accent 1000 and 1400 with Nueye.

Where can I turn if I have an Assistive Technology question? [Join the QIAT Listserv](#)

The QIAT Listserv is a place where anyone - user, educator, parent, caregiver, anyone, can post a question concerning Assistive Technology. Join the list and participate in the conversations. Together we can all make a difference.

Recently this question was posted: "Does anyone know of any Grants that can help with the purchase of AAC applications?"

A QIAT member posted this wonderful resource: [Help Getting an iPad](#)

Resource of the Month - Getting to Know Wisconsin Services

Looking for a specific resource and you are not sure if it is in your county? Check out the [Wisconsin Assistive Technology Resource Map](#). Just click on your county and see what services are offered.



Do you know of an adult or student with a physical disability who likes to play online games? One of the wonderful things about technology is that it is adaptable. Today, game controllers can be made to fit any and all abilities. Check out this great article on various styles and manufacturers that create unique game controllers: [Ingenious Video Game Controllers Made For People With Disabilities](#)



March is [Trisomy Awareness Day](#) - Trisomy is defined as having three copies of the 21 chromosome. There are several common disorders originating from Trisomy 21 including Down Syndrome, Edwards Syndrome, Klinefelter's Syndrome, and Patau Syndrome. Assistive Technology that can assist users who have these disorders are, AAC devices, word processing and word prediction programs, memory aides, voice to text, and curriculum resources, like ReadTopia, for those who are not functioning at grade level.

March 21 [Worldwide Down Syndrome Awareness Day](#).

March [Brain Injury Awareness Month World Wide](#)

March is [National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month](#)

March 26 Global Day- [Purple Day for Epilepsy](#)

Upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings:

March 7, 2022: [Low and No Cost Resources to Support Assistive Technology](#)

April 26, 2022: [Finding Tools to Fit the Needs of Today's Students](#)

May 11, 2022: [Non-Academic Activities: Engaging Students in Social and Leisure Activities](#)

May 19, 2022: [Supporting Students with Medical Complexities](#)



If you have any questions or comments about the AT Forward Project, please contact Kathy White at Kathy.White@CESA2.org or Stacy Duffy at stacy.duffy@cesa2.org.